596 This conjugal union differs clearly from [227] ordinary
614 forms of marriage. In view of the fact that the husband gets a
621 wife without paying a bride price for her, the wife is not given
583 in usufruct, and therefore she must be treated with the greatest consideration or she may be taken back. The situation can only be normalized if the husband is rich enough to present to the donor a gift equal to or preferably, if possible, greater than the dowry brought by the wife, or he may give a similar gift to the wife (1).

1. Such property is the wife's paraphernalia.

In these situations also, the procedure varies a great deal. The donor may offer a girl from another community and provide her with a dowry. This is what Biton did in order to bind Ngolo to him: Biton gave him a girl designated by the marabouts as one of the elect, and he also provided the girl with a rich dowry.

The significance of such alliances can be estimated only when one has some knowledge of the intentions of the parties involved, especially those of the donor. We shall see one important type in the chapter on Islam, the marriage of Allah.

IV. The common cult (2). The territorial community.

311 2. Communities may be united under the
621 protection of the same god. Here we shall
776 study only their union under the protection
794 of the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana dugu-da-siri). Other common cults will be studied in the following chapter, "Brotherhoods."

In the mind of the Bambara, the earth, together with everything in it, is the property of the spirits. As a result, no one may make use of it or presume to settle on or cultivate an unused field without first going through certain ceremonies.

For this purpose, either on his own responsibility or, more often, with the aid of "the one who knows" (don-na-ba), a

311 Bambara seeks the "genie, master of the earth" (nyana dugu-da-
621 siri) or, more exactly, determines where this genie dwells. It
776 may be a spring, a hill, or a rock; often it is a fine tree, in-
794 variably surrounded by a grove or at least with a grove nearby. Then, always following the same procedure, he finds out the conditions under which the genie will allow someone to settle in his domain in order to live there and cultivate the lands. Thus, a contract is worked out which governs the man's exploitation of the genie's territorial domain. As a result, provided he worships the genie in the manner required, the man [228] will be able to work under the protection of the god. Anyone who has had a share in the contract, even if only through representatives, will likewise profit if he scrupulously observes the conditions.

621 The establishment of a village requires the cooperation of
622 several communities, each represented by its fa. One of these fa
793 will either appropriate the leadership or be chosen as the rep-
794 resentative or chief of the others. Sometimes he may be merely primus inter pares; otherwise he may have managed to have his primacy conceded by the rest. It is this chief who treats with the genie in the name of the whole village; thus, he becomes the "high priest of the genie" (nyana-n-son-na-ba) with the essential function of "making the offerings" (son') required by the cult. Furthermore, he administers the earthly domain of the genie and is therefore called dugu-tigi (master of the earth).

To the nyana dugu-da-siri is usually attributed the same dyamu as that of its high priest, just as though the genie belonged to the spiritual family of the priest. This is a result consistent with the mentality of the Bambara.

621 The same mental state accounts for the custom in certain
776 villages of dedicating a living animal, often a ram, to the
778 nyana dugu-da-siri and believing it to be the god's mount. The
[825] animal is allowed to wander freely about the village, and its mischief is never punished; indeed, the people enjoy caressing and indulging it. The animal takes on some of the attributes of the genie and is, as it were, endowed with certain supernatural virtues, so only good can come from contact with it.

621 Theoretically, each settlement has only one genie, but
776 actually it may have several, especially if it has been settled by

621 776 successive groups, each recognizing a genie-protector. In that case, the genie first recognized and worshiped takes precedence over the others. In any case, social life requires each segment to respect the gods of its neighbors, and this respect carries with it a certain amount of superstitious fear.

311 621 744 It is evident from the foregoing that occupying and cultivating land poses certain problems for the settlement benefited, and these may be grouped under three heads: the cult of the genie-protector; the exploitation of the land; and the organization of the territorial community.

793 794 The cult. This is mainly supported by the high priest, whose principal duty is to "make the offerings" (son') to the "genie" [229] (nyana), hence his title nyana-son-na-ba. He is assisted by the council of fa, one of whom, the syere (follower), may replace him in case of need. The office of high priest is for life and is inherited in the same way as his faya. This continuity shows that the genie is actually regarded as a kind of spiritual ancestor of the priest, as we have seen from the fact that it is given the same dyamu as its high priest.

794 796 The cult ceremonies are very simple. They consist of offerings made by the high priest, who at the same time indicates to the genie the purpose for which they are being made. The most solemn ceremonies take place when millet is sown and harvested. For these occasions, every worshiper is expected to bring a contribution in proportion to his resources. The kind of gift is not specified; everyone brings whatever he can or whatever he wishes, usually animals (sheep, beef, fowl, etc.), grain, and especially millet beer (dlo).

782 796 778 + During these general gatherings, from which no one is excluded, only the high priest and the members of the council enter the sacred grove or approach the genie's abode. There, the high priest makes known the purpose of the sacrifice: to thank the genie for his past favors; to offer him the gifts brought by everyone; and to ask him to continue to protect the community so that its prosperity may be assured. Then the victims are sacrificed, and their blood is sprinkled on the tree trunk or whatever object or place is reputed to be the home of the genie.

genie. The same is done with libations of dlo or the juice of kola nuts. Since anything offered to the genie is supposed to be consumed on the spot, an orgy lasting for several days usually follows.

In addition to these two great obligatory ceremonies especially concerned with the exploitation of the land, the god's protection is sought by similar, but much simplified means in all affairs whether they concern the entire settlement (wars, disasters), a particular patriarchal or familial community, or even a single individual. Through the high priest as intermediary, the offering and the request are made for the purpose indicated by the petitioner, who often promises to make a further gift to the genie when his wish has been granted. Vows of this type are made very frequently.

The cult of his high [230] priests and of all the important men of the settlement is tied in with the cult of the genie, obviously a consequence of the fact that the genie is the spiritual patron of the community which honors him; its members are his children and with him form what amounts to a family. So, in line with what happens in a patriarchal or familial community, the territorial community also holds an annual festival for the dead, during which special honor is paid to noted personages, among whom deceased high priests have first place.

Exploitation of the land. The high priest in charge of the cult likewise regulates everything concerning the exploitation of the terrestrial domain of the genie, and in this capacity he is known as the dugu-tigi (1), master of the earth. In this

1. In line with common practice, I shall henceforth use this title to designate both capacities, the high priest and the master of the earth.

office he has the help of the council of fa, and in important matters he must follow their advice.

With the help of this council, he allots the land when

311 621 423 793 the community is founded. His permission is required before anyone may build a dwelling in the portion reserved as the seat of the community; the village is therefore kept within precise limits. In practice, however, everyone builds wherever he pleases if there is no objection. If there is an objection, the dispute is settled by the dugu-tigi and his council.

423 621 Outside the village proper, the terrain includes fields which, either at the start or during the course of settlement, are allotted in perpetuity to the various fa of the community by the dugu-tigi in council. Each fa and his dependents have indefinite use of the same fields, although by law the authority which assigned them may take them away without being required to justify the act. This use is a kind of usufruct that is more extensive than that of our law, since the beneficiary may [425] use the land without restriction, except that he may not alienate it. The tenant, however, may not use the land in any way that might be prejudicial to the community as a whole without the consent of the dugu-tigi and council. For example, such would be the case if he proposed to give his right of use to an outsider.

Any land not specifically allotted [231] and anything it produces or contains belongs, theoretically, to the member of the community who cultivates it. Certain fruits or produce, however, are sometimes reserved for the community as a whole: the leaves or fruit of the baobab, karite, nété, tamarind trees, etc.; the fish in certain ponds, watercourses, fluvial zones, [476] etc.; the game in certain cantons, etc. On the dates set for these collective enterprises by the dugu-tigi and his council, the people proceed in a body to gather fruit, harvest the crop, fish, or hunt. Sometimes each person is allowed to keep what he has gathered; sometimes all the proceeds are collected for the dugu-tigi to distribute according to custom. There are also special regulations governing the extraction of matter or materials from the ground.

621 622 Organization of the territorial community. The duties of the dugu-tigi and his council are not limited to directing the cult and regulating the use of land. Anything that happens within the territorial community concerns the nyana-dugu-da-siri, because the members of the community are his children